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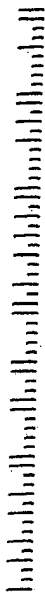
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/762,163	09/30/2005	John Bott	4002-006	1307

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EXAMINER	
SHIBUYA, MARK LANCE	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1641	
MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
11/15/2010	PAPER

Dear Patent Applicant,

The USPTO's 2007-2012 Strategic Plan outlined a number of initiatives to improve patent quality and timeliness. Among those initiatives was a pilot designed to improve patent quality by determining the extent to which the organized submission of documents together with comments by the public would provide useful prior art for examiners. This pilot, known as the Peer Reviewed Prior Art pilot, was launched on June 15th, 2007, and continued until June 16th, 2009. The culmination of this two year pilot resulted in numerous data points that support the premise that members of the public, when collaborating in an organized online fashion, are capable of contributing to the location of prior art of value to the examiner during the examination process.

Some of the significant data points collected:

- 189 applications were volunteered by inventors to participate in the program;
- 603 pieces of prior art were submitted and are now a part of the record in these applications;
- 30 volunteered applications received a first action on the merits that contained a rejection of at least one claim based upon peer reviewed prior art (art found by both the examiner and the public);
- More than 500 unique reviewers participated in a review of an application on the Web site and

In the interest of gathering data from a more diverse pool of patent applications and to further explore the value of peer-submitted art to the examination process, the USPTO in cooperation with the New York Law School's Center for Patent Innovations has launched a new one-year pilot. This pilot will test the scalability of the peer review concept by expanding the candidate pool of applications to technology areas such as Life Sciences, Telecommunications, Business Methods and Computer Hardware and Software and by significantly increasing the total number of applications that may be accepted into the pilot. This pilot will encourage participation from a broader candidate pool of applications, increase the participation limits of the original pilot and streamline the participation process by utilizing automation solutions.

As an incentive for requesting to participate in this pilot and upon acceptance, your application will be advanced "out of turn" for an initial office action on the merits. This will typically result in a first office action at least six months earlier than current latency times. In addition, you may also pair participation in this pilot with a request for early publication, accelerating the consideration of your application even further.

You have been identified as a patent applicant having an application that may qualify for the pilot program. To determine if your application is eligible for this pilot and to get detailed information, please visit the USPTO website for this pilot at: http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/peerpriorartpilotindex.jsp

The pilot will continue until its scheduled termination date or we reach the limit of 1000 participating applications. Any one applicant may submit up to 25 applications for inclusion during this pilot.

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please e-mail the pilot's administrator at PeerReviewPilot2011@USPTO.gov. You may also wish to visit the project website at <http://www.peertopatent.org>

Getting the best prior art before the examiner leads to a stronger, higher quality patent, and this pilot represents one of many ways in which the USPTO is seeking to achieve this goal.